IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 15 (previously presented) An assembly for enabling separation of a fluid sample into first and second phases, comprising:

a tube having a bottom, a top, and a cylindrical sidewall therebetween,

a separator located in the tube, the separator comprising:

a deformable bellows having an upper end and a lower end, and a sealing portion of the bellows between the upper end and the lower end providing sealing engagement with the cylindrical sidewall of the tube,

a ballast engaged with a portion of the bellows, the ballast having a density greater than the density of the first phase,

a float engaged with a portion of the bellows, the float having a density less than the density of the first phase,

wherein application of centrifugal forces to the tube promotes elongation of the bellows such that the sealing portion is able to move out of sealing engagement with the cylindrical sidewall.

Claim 16 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 15, wherein the ballast is secured to the bellows at a location proximate the lower end of the bellows.

Claim 17 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 15, wherein the float is engageable with portions of the bellows proximate the upper end of the bellows.

Claim 18 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 15, wherein the ballast is secured to the bellows at a location proximate the lower end of the bellows, wherein the float is engageable with portions of the bellows proximate the upper end of the bellows, and wherein upon application of centrifugal force, the ballast and the float exert opposing forces on the bellows to provide the elongation.

Claim 19 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 15, wherein the sealing portion of the bellows between the upper end and the lower end is a toroidal sealing section.

Claim 20 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 16, wherein the ballast is substantially tubular.

Claim 21 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 17, wherein the float is substantially hollow.

Claim 22 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 17, wherein the bellows is substantially hollow and comprises an inwardly directed annular bead proximate the upper end of the bellows, and wherein the float comprises an annular groove engageable with the annular bead of the bellows.

Claim 23 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 15, wherein the tube comprises a closure at its top end, and wherein the separator is releasably engaged to the closure.

Claim 24 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 23, wherein the closure comprises a lower end comprising a recess, and wherein the bellows comprises a section releasably engageable with the recess.

Claim 25 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 24, wherein the recess comprises deflectable arc sections, and wherein the bellows comprises a groove releaseably engageable with the deflectable arc sections.

Claim 26 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 15, wherein the bottom end of the tube comprises an opening having a closure engaged therein.

Claim 27 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 22, wherein the upper end of the bellows comprises a conical shape.

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Claim 30 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 17, wherein at least a portion of the float is arranged inside the bellows, and wherein at least a portion of the ballast is arranged outside the bellows.

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Claim 31 (previously presented) An separator for enabling separation of a fluid sample into first and second phases within a tube, comprising:

a deformable bellows having an upper end and a lower end, and a sealing portion of the bellows between the upper end and the lower end providing sealing engagement with a cylindrical sidewall of the tube,

a ballast engaged with a portion of the bellows, the ballast having a density greater than the density of the first phase,

a float engaged with a portion of the bellows, the float having a density less than the density of the first phase,

wherein application of centrifugal forces to the tube promotes elongation of the bellows such that the sealing portion is able to move out of sealing engagement with the cylindrical sidewall.

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Claim 32 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 31, wherein the ballast is secured to the bellows at a location proximate the lower end of the bellows.

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Claim 33 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 31, wherein the float is engageable with portions of the bellows proximate the upper end of the bellows.

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Claim 34 (previously presented) The assembly of claim 31, wherein the ballast is secured to the bellows at a location proximate the lower end of the bellows, wherein the float is engageable with portions of the bellows proximate the upper end of the bellows, and wherein upon application of centrifugal force, the ballast and the float exert opposing forces on the bellows to provide the elongation.

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Claim ~~35~~ (previously presented) The assembly of claim ~~31~~, wherein the sealing portion of the bellows between the upper end and the lower end is a toroidal sealing section.

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Claim ~~36~~ (previously presented) The assembly of claim ~~32~~, wherein the ballast is substantially tubular.

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Claim ~~37~~ (previously presented) The assembly of claim ~~33~~, wherein the float is substantially hollow.

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Claim ~~38~~ (previously presented) The assembly of claim ~~33~~, wherein the bellows is substantially hollow and comprises an inwardly directed annular bead proximate the upper end of the bellows, and wherein the float comprises an annular groove engageable with the annular bead of the bellows.

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Claim ~~39~~ (previously presented) The assembly of claim ~~31~~, wherein the tube comprises a closure at its top end, and wherein the separator is releasably engaged to the closure.

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Claim ~~40~~ (previously presented) The assembly of claim ~~39~~, wherein the closure comprises a lower end comprising a recess, and wherein the bellows comprises a section releasably engageable with the recess.

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Claim ~~41~~ (previously presented) The assembly of claim ~~40~~, wherein the recess comprises deflectable arc sections, and wherein the bellows comprises a groove releaseably engageable with the deflectable arc sections.

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Claim ~~42~~ (previously presented) The assembly of claim ~~31~~, wherein the bottom end of the tube comprises an opening having a closure engaged therein.

Claim ~~43~~ 13 (previously presented) The assembly of claim ~~38~~ 8, wherein the upper end of the bellows comprises a conical shape.

Claim ~~44~~ 14 (previously presented) The assembly of claim ~~31~~ 1, wherein at least a portion of the float is arranged inside the bellows, and wherein at least a portion of the ballast is arranged outside the bellows.

Claim ~~45~~ 29 (currently amended) An assembly for enabling separation of a fluid sample into first and second phases, comprising:

a tube having a bottom, a top, and a cylindrical sidewall therebetween, the bottom and the top having openings with closures engaged therein,

a separator located in the tube, the separator comprising:

a deformable section comprising a sealing region, the sealing region providing sealing engagement with the cylindrical sidewall of the tube,

a ballast section engaged with the deformable section ~~portion~~, the ballast section having a density greater than the density of the first phase,

a float section engaged with the deformable section ~~portion~~, the float section having a density less than the density of the first phase,

wherein application of centrifugal forces to the tube promotes elongation of the deformable section such that the sealing region is able to move out of sealing engagement with the cylindrical sidewall.

Claim ~~46~~ 30 (previously presented) The assembly of claim ~~45~~ 29, wherein the deformable section comprises a deformable bellows having an upper end and a lower end, at least a sealing portion of the bellows between the upper end and the lower end providing sealing engagement with the cylindrical sidewall of the tube, wherein the ballast section comprises a ballast engaged with a portion of the bellows, and wherein the float section comprises a float engaged with a portion of the bellows.